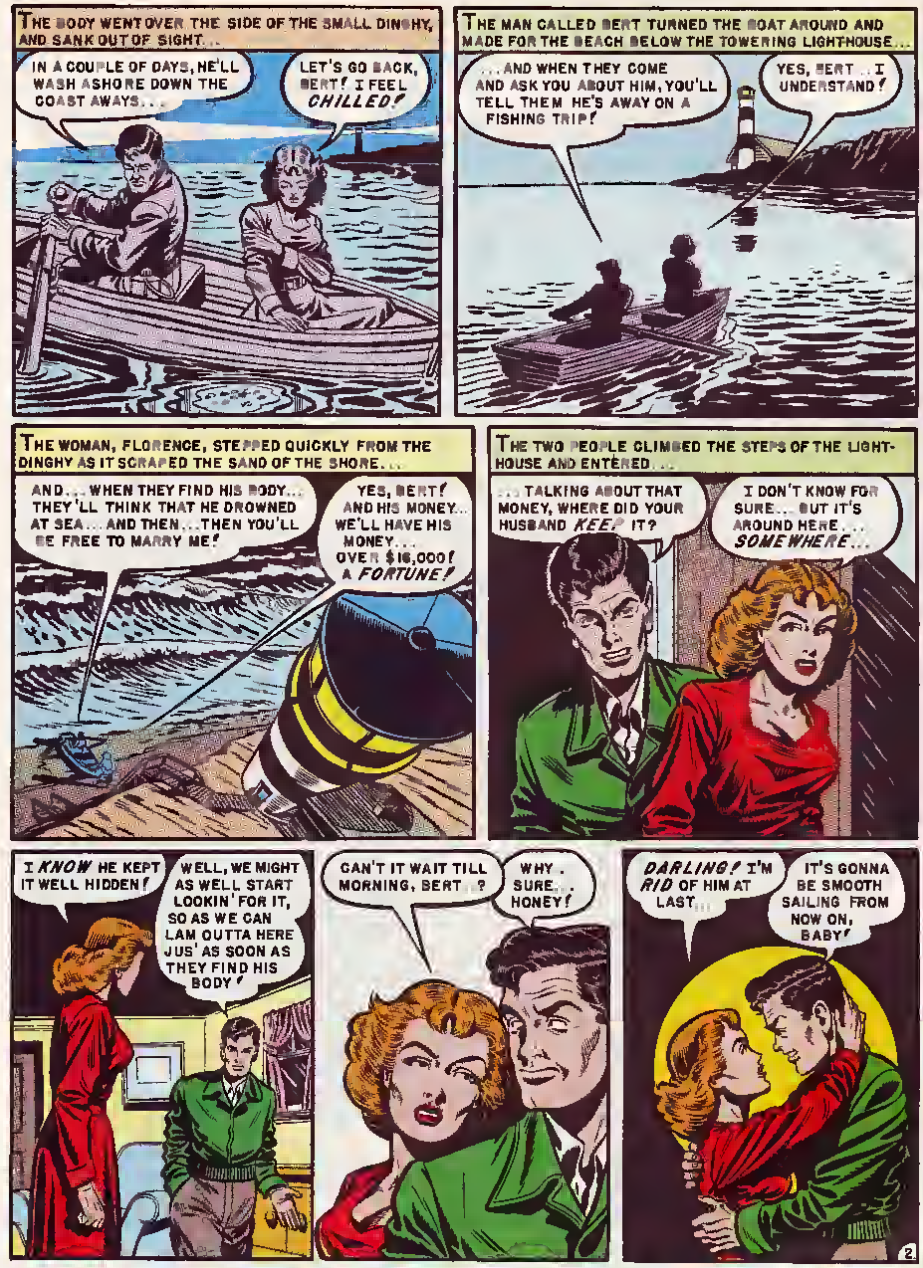
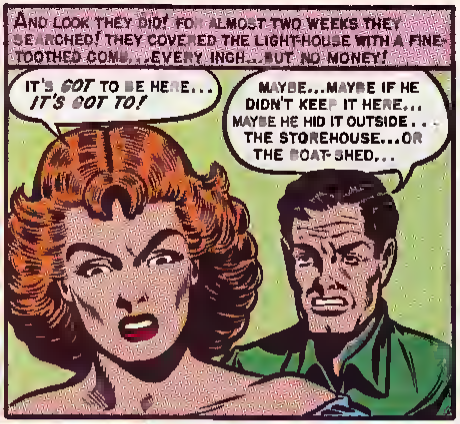
HORROR
AN ENTERTAINING COMIC
NO.13
THE VAULT OF HORROR
AN ENTERTAINING COMIC
REPRINT EDITION
FEATURING THE NEW TREND IN MAGAZINES..
ILLUSTRATED SUSPENSTORIES
WE DARE YOU TO READ!
GOOD LORD! THE CASKET IS OPEN...HER BODY IS GONE! EDGAR...DO YOU HEAR ME? WHAT COULD HAVE HAPPENED TO IT?
JOHNNY CRAIG

THE VAULT OF HORROR!


THE BODY WENT OVER THE SIDE OF THE SMALL DINGHY, AND SANK OUT OF SIGHT...
IN A COUPLE OF DAYS, HE'LL WASH ASHORE DOWN THE COAST AWAYS...
LET'S GO BACK, BERT! I FEEL CHILLED!
THE MAN CALLED BERT TURNED THE BOAT AROUND AND MADE FOR THE BEACH BELOW THE TOWERING LIGHTHOUSE...
...AND WHEN THEY COME AND ASK YOU ABOUT HIM, YOU'LL TELL THEM HE'S AWAY ON A FISHING TRIP!
YES, BERT ..I UNDERSTAND!
THE WOMAN, FLORENCE, STEPPED QUICKLY FROM THE DINGHY AS IT SCRAPED THE SAND OF THE SHORE...
AND...WHEN THEY FIND HIS BODY... THEY'LL THINK THAT HE DROWNED AT SEA...AND THEN...THEN YOU'LL BE FREE TO MARRY ME!
YES, BERT! AND HIS MONEY... WE'LL HAVE HIS MONEY... OVER $16,000! A FORTUNE!
THE TWO PEOPLE CLIMBED THE STEPS OF THE LIGHTHOUSE AND ENTERED...
...TALKING ABOUT THAT MONEY, WHERE DID YOUR HUSBAND KEEP IT?
I DON'T KNOW FOR SURE... BUT IT'S AROUND HERE... SOMEWHERE...
I KNOW HE KEPT IT WELL HIDDEN!
WELL, WE MIGHT AS WELL START LOOKIN' FOR IT, SO AS WE CAN LAM OUTTA HERE JUS' AS SOON AS THEY FIND HIS BODY!
CAN'T IT WAIT TILL MORNING, BERT..?
WHY. SURE... HONEY!
DARLING! I'M RID OF HIM AT LAST...
IT'S GONNA BE SMOOTH SAILING FROM NOW ON, BABY!
2.

BUT THE NEXT DAY, THINGS DID NOT GO AS SMOOTHLY AS THEY HAD PLANNED! BERT AND FLO COULD NOT FIND A TRACE OF THE MONEY...
YOU SAY HE KEPT IT HERE IN THE LIGHT-HOUSE!
YES! YES! HE KEPT IT SOMEWHERE IN THIS PLACE! KEEP LOOKING...

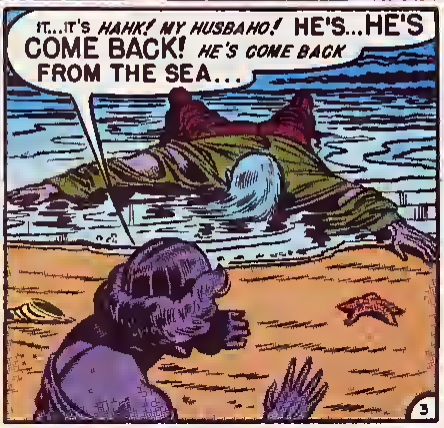

AND LOOK THEY DID! FOR ALMOST TWO WEEKS THEY SEARCHED! THEY COVERED THE LIGHTHOUSE WITH A FINE-TOOTHED COMB...EVERY INCH...BUT NO MONEY!
IT'S GOT TO BE HERE... IT'S GOT TO!
MAYBE...MAYBE IF HE DIDN'T KEEP IT HERE... MAYBE HE HID IT OUTSIDE... THE STOREHOUSE...OR THE BOAT-SHED...

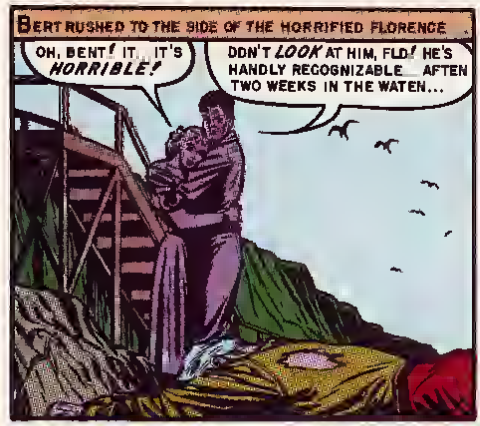
I'LL GO DOWN TO THE BEACH TO THE SHED, BERT! YOU TRY THE STORE-HOUSE! DON'T WORRY! WE'LL FIND IT!

CAUTIOUSLY, FLO MADE HER WAY DOWN THE STEPS TO THE BEACH...
I DON'T THINK HANK WOULD HAVE KEPT HIS MONEY DOWN HERE! IT WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN SAFE...

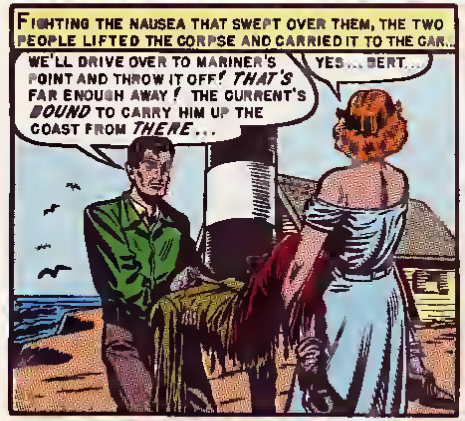
SLOWLY SHE ROUNDED THE ROCKS NEAR THE SHED...
A HIGH SEA COULD TAKE THIS SHED...AND...AND... GASP...

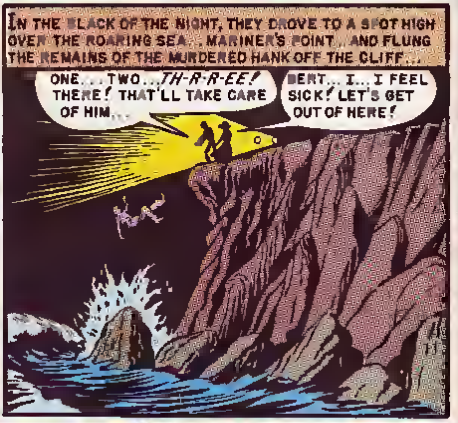
E-E-E-A-A-A-H-H!
FLO! FLO... WHAT IS IT?


IT...IT'S HANK! MY HUSBAND! HE'S...HE'S COME BACK! HE'S COME BACK FROM THE SEA...


BERT RUSHED TO THE SIDE OF THE HORRIFIED FLORENCE
OH, BENT! IT... IT'S HORRIBLE!
DON'T LOOK AT HIM, FLO! HE'S HANDLY RECOGNIZABLE... AFTEN TWO WEEKS IN THE WATEN...

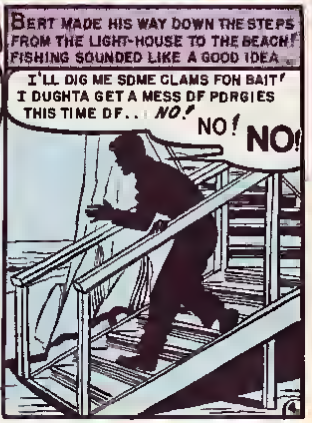
WHAT WILL WE DO, BERT? WE CAN'T REPORT THAT HIS BODY WASHED ASHORE HERE! IT... IT'S TOO MUCH OF A COINCIDENCE!
WE'VE GOT TO PUT HIM BACK, FLO... BACK INTO THE SEA...

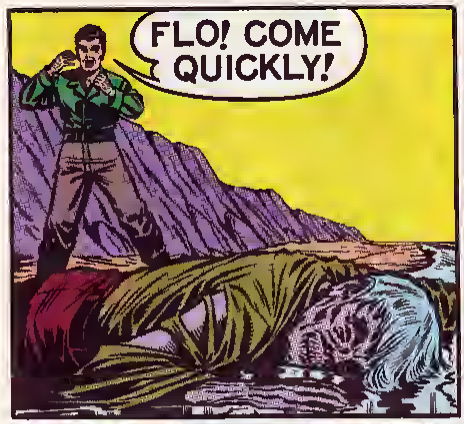

FIGHTING THE NAUSEA THAT SWEPT OVER THEM, THE TWO PEOPLE LIFTED THE CORPSE AND CARRIED IT TO THE CAR...
WE'LL DRIVE OVER TO MARINER'S POINT AND THROW IT OFF! THAT'S FAR ENOUGH AWAY! THE CURRENT'S BOUND TO CARRY HIM UP THE COAST FROM THERE...
YES... BERT...

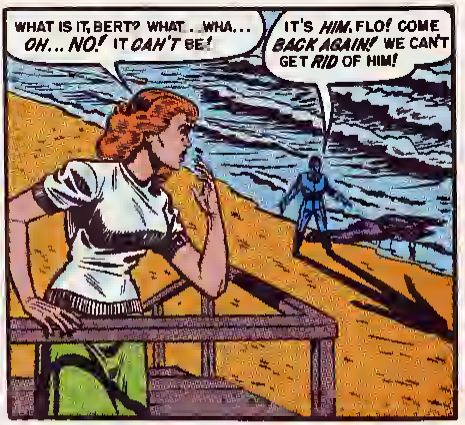

IN THE BLACK OF THE NIGHT, THEY DROVE TO A SPOT HIGH OVER THE ROARING SEA... MARINER'S POINT... AND FLUNG THE REMAINS OF THE MURDERED HANK OFF THE CLIFF...
ONE... TWO... TH-R-R-EE! THERE! THAT'LL TAKE CARE OF HIM...
BERT... I... I FEEL SICK! LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!

IN THE DAYS THAT FOLLOWED, FLO LISTENED CANEFULLY TO EACH NADID NEWS NEPONT...
NOTHING! NOT A WORD ABOUT ANYONE FINDING A BODY...
DON'T WONNY, FLO! IT'LL TURN UP...

BUT HANK'S BODY DIDN'T TURN UP AND THEN, ONE DAY...
I CAN'T STAND IT ANY LONGER! THIS WAITING IS DRIVING ME NUTS!
BENT! WHY DON'T YOU TAKE THE DINGHY OUT AND DO A LITTLE FISHING... IT'LL CALM YOUR NENVES!


BERT MADE HIS WAY DOWN THE STEPS FROM THE LIGHT-HOUSE TO THE BEACH! FISHING SOUNDED LIKE A GOOD IDEA...
I'LL DIG ME SOME CLAMS FOR BAIT! I DUGHTA GET A MESS OF PORGIES THIS TIME OF... NO!
NO! NO!


FLO! COME QUICKLY!


WHAT IS IT, BERT? WHAT . . WHA . . . OH . . . NO! IT CAN'T BE!
IT'S HIM, FLO! COME BACK AGAIN! WE CAN'T GET RID OF HIM!

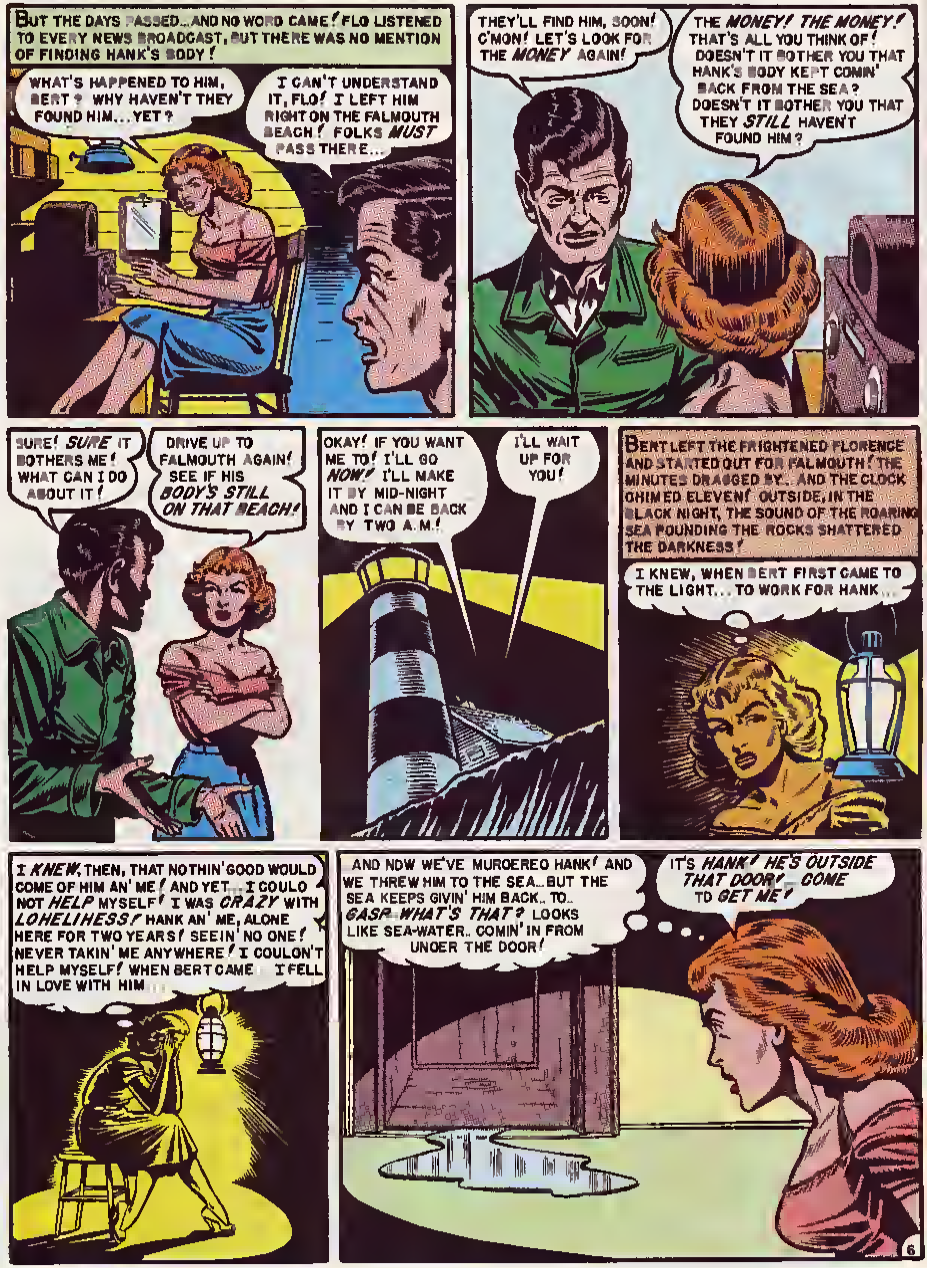
IT'S GHASTLY! HE . . . HE'S ALL . . . ROTTED!
DON'T LOOK AT HIM, FLO! THE FISH AND CRABS HAVE MADE HIM HORRIBLE!

WHAT WILL WE DO WITH HIM THIS TIME, BERT! WHY DON'T WE PHONE THE POLICE AND . . .
NO . . WE CAN'T! IF HE'S SUPPOSED TO BE OUT ON A FISHING TRIP, IT'D BE A STRANGE COINCIDENCE THAT HIS BODY WASHED UP HERE . . . BACK HOME!

WELL, IT IS STRANGE! YOU'VE GOT TO MAKE SURE SOMEONE FINDS HIM THIS TIME!
I KNOW! I'LL DRIVE UP-COAST TO FALMOUTH AND INSTEAD OF THROWING HIS BODY INTO THE SEA . . .

. . . I'LL LEAVE IT RIGHT ON THE BEACH . . . AS IF IT WAS WASHED UP THERE! THEN SOMEONE'S SURE TO FIND IT!
THAT'S A GOOD IDEA, BERT!

AND SO, THAT NIGHT, BERT DROVE TO FALMOUTH, TWENTY MILES NORTH OF THEIR DESERTED LIGHT-HOUSE . . . AND LEFT THE BODY ON THE BEACH!
THERE! SOMEONE'LL FIND IT, COME MORNING!


BUT THE DAYS PASSED...AND NO WORD CAME! FLO LISTENED TO EVERY NEWS BROADCAST, BUT THERE WAS NO MENTION OF FINDING HANK'S BODY!
WHAT'S HAPPENED TO HIM, BERT? WHY HAVEN'T THEY FOUND HIM...YET?
I CAN'T UNDERSTAND IT, FLO! I LEFT HIM RIGHT ON THE FALMOUTH BEACH! FOLKS MUST PASS THERE...
THEY'LL FIND HIM, SOON! C'MON! LET'S LOOK FOR THE MONEY AGAIN!
THE MONEY! THE MONEY! THAT'S ALL YOU THINK OF! DOESN'T IT BOTHER YOU THAT HANK'S BODY KEPT COMIN' BACK FROM THE SEA? DOESN'T IT BOTHER YOU THAT THEY STILL HAVEN'T FOUND HIM?
SURE! SURE IT BOTHERS ME! WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT IT!
DRIVE UP TO FALMOUTH AGAIN! SEE IF HIS BODY'S STILL ON THAT BEACH!
OKAY! IF YOU WANT ME TO! I'LL GO NOW! I'LL MAKE IT BY MID-NIGHT AND I CAN BE BACK BY TWO A.M.!
I'LL WAIT UP FOR YOU!
BERT LEFT THE FRIGHTENED FLORENCE AND STARTED OUT FOR FALMOUTH! THE MINUTES DRAGGED BY... AND THE CLOCK CHIMED ELEVEN! OUTSIDE, IN THE BLACK NIGHT, THE SOUND OF THE ROARING SEA POUNDING THE ROCKS SHATTERED THE DARKNESS!
I KNEW, WHEN BERT FIRST CAME TO THE LIGHT... TO WORK FOR HANK...
I KNEW, THEN, THAT NOTHIN' GOOD WOULD COME OF HIM AN' ME! AND YET... I COULD NOT HELP MYSELF! I WAS CRAZY WITH LONELINESS! HANK AN' ME, ALONE HERE FOR TWO YEARS! SEEIN' NO ONE! NEVER TAKIN' ME ANYWHERE! I COULDN'T HELP MYSELF! WHEN BERT CAME... I FELL IN LOVE WITH HIM...
AND NOW WE'VE MURDERED HANK! AND WE THREW HIM TO THE SEA... BUT THE SEA KEEPS GIVIN' HIM BACK.. TO.. GASP--WHAT'S THAT? LOOKS LIKE SEA-WATER.. COMIN' IN FROM UNDER THE DOOR!
IT'S HANK! HE'S OUTSIDE THAT DOOR!... COME TO GET ME!
6

THE TERRIFIED FLORENCE BACKED AWAY FROM THE DOOR... BACK... BACK TO THE SPIRAL STAIRCASE THAT LED TO THE TOP OF THE LIGHT-HOUSE!
HE'S RATTLIN' THE KNOB! HE'S GOING TO COME IN AND...
SLOWLY SHE BACKS UP THE STAIRCASE..
THE DOOR...HE'S OPENED THE DOOR! I CAN HEAR HIM....COMIN' ACROSS THE SITTIN' ROOM! COMIN'....TO THE STAIRS....
HE'S ON THE STAIRS NOW! I CAN HEAR HIS FOOTSTEPS... COMIN' UP... COMIN' UP AFTER ME...
SUDDENLY, FLORENCE FOUND HERSELF AT THE TOP OF THE LIGHT-HOUSE...NO PLACE TO GO... CAUGHT...LIKE A RAT IN A TRAP...
I'M CORNERED! I CAN'T... GASP HIDE! THE LIGHT! I'LL...TURN IT OFF! MAYBE HE WON'T SEE ME!
HE'S COMIN' CLOSER! HE'S REACHIN' THE TOP OF THE STAIRS! HE'LL BE HERE... SOON...HE... HE'S...COMIN'... COMIN'... I... I...
A-A-A-H-H-H!
A FEW MINUTES LATER, A CAR DROVE UP! IT WAS BERT!
H-M-M-M! THAT'S STRANGE! THE LIGHT IS OUT!
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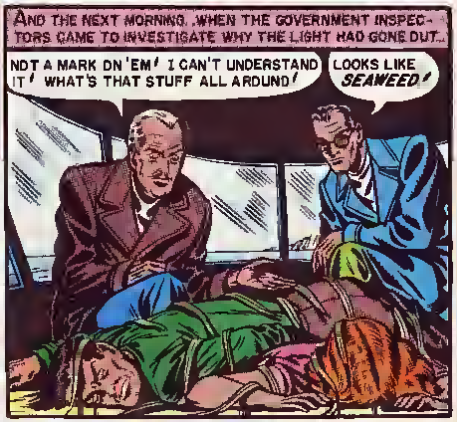
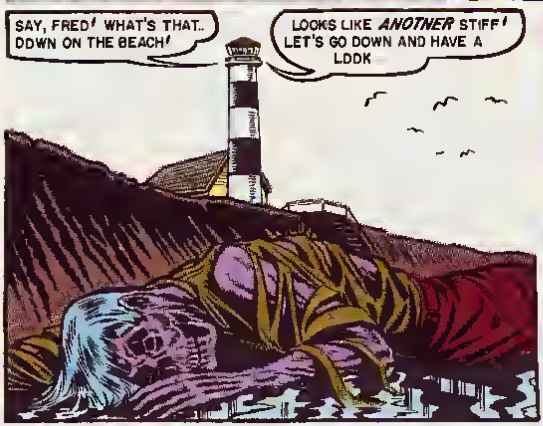
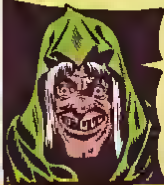




AND THAT'S THE STORY, DEAR READER! ER... WHAT DO *YOU* THINK HAPPENED UP THERE AT THE TOP OF THAT LIGHT HOUSE? DID HANK *REALLY* COME BACK OR WAS IT JUST BERT AND FLO'S IMAGINATION? CERTAINLY, HIS CORPSE WAS PERSISTANT WASN'T IT? BUT THEN... HEH, HEH... I ALWAYS TELL ABOUT CADAVERS THAT REFUSE TO STAY BURIED WHETHER IN SOIL OR SEA! OH.. BY THE WAY! IF YOU'RE INTERESTED IN THAT $16,000, THEY FOUND IT.. IN A MONEY-BELT ON HANK'S BODY! IT WAS ALL WATER-SOAKED AND ROTTED... HEH, HEH... JUST LIKE POOR HANK!



AND DON'T FORGET WRITE TO ME IF YOU LIKE MY TALES! ADDRESS YOUR LETTER TO:
THE VAULT-KEEPER

WHAT IS THE TERROR SURROUNDING THIS ONCE SPLENDID HOME?
WHY DO THE VERY WALLS SHAKE AS IF FROM SOME IMPENDING DISASTER?
WHO ARE THE SHADOWY DWELLERS LIVING HERE UNDER THE SPELL OF

The curse of HARKLEY HEATH

HARKLEY H[illegible]

ANOTHER SUSPENSTORY FROM THE VAULT OF HORROR!

"JUNE, 1820... I, CLAYTON HARKLEY, DYING FROM THE MORTAL WOUND INFLICTED BY MY VILLAINOUS BROTHER, CAN DO NOTHING TO PREVENT MY WEALTH FROM FALLING INTO HIS POSSESSION..."

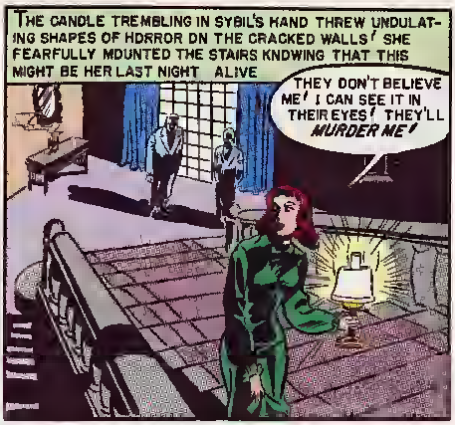
THIS IS "HARKLEY HEATH"! ONCE A PROUD MANSION, NOW CRUMBLING AND DECAYED, ROTTING ON THE ENGLISH MOOR... AND THE DISINTEGRATION WHICH BEFOULS THIS ACCURSED DWELLING OF DOOM IS SHARED BY THE LAST MEMBERS OF THE HARKLEY CLAN!

BUT THIS FORTUNE PASSES FROM MY DOOMED HANDS WITH A MOST HIDEOUS CURSE UPON IT! MAY THIS WEALTH CORRUPT AND INFEST EACH SUCCEEDING GENERATION, UNTIL THIS HERITAGE OF HATE AND MURDER SHALL BLOT OUT THIS FAMILY AND THE WORLD SHALL KNOW NO MORE OF THE VILE HARKLEY BLOOD! *REQUIESCAT IN PACE!*"

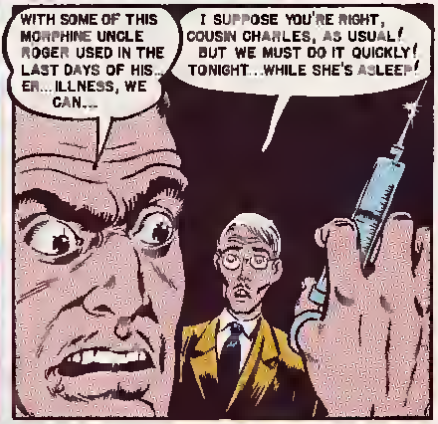
BAH! ALL LIES! FOOLISH!

HOW CAN YOU BELIEVE THAT STUFF? OLD FAMILY CURSES, BAH! THE MONEY IS OURS, NOW, AND NO ONE CAN TAKE IT AWAY! WE ARE THE LAST OF THE HARKLEYS!
B-BUT, COUSIN CHARLES, SUPPOSE SOMEONE FINDS OUT THAT WE MURDERED UNCLE ROGER?
NEVER SAY THAT AGAIN, COUSIN EDGAR! FORGET IT EVER HAPPENED! AND STOP THAT WHINING! I TELL YOU WE'RE RICH AND NOTHING CAN...
RAP
RAP
RAP
GOOD EVENING... SNIFF... I'M... ER... MR. HAGERS, YOUR DEAR DEPARTED UNCLE'S LAWYER! ER... MAY I... SNIFF... COME IN?
IT'S MISS SYBIL HARKLEY I WANTED TO SEE, IF YOU DON'T MIND!
YES, YES, RIGHT HERE!
I KNOW THAT THIS IS AN HOUR OF MUCH SORROW FOR YOU, BUT IT'S MY DUTY TO INFORM YOU OF YOUR UNCLE'S WILL!
HIS... HIS WILL?
YES, YOUR UNCLE HAS SPECIFIED THAT ALL OF HIS WEALTH SHALL GO TO... MISS SYBIL!
I... I'M SO SURPRISED, MR. HAGERS! I... THE SHOCK!
I UNDERSTAND, MY DEAR! I'LL LEAVE YOU THEN, AND I WILL SEE YOU IN MY OFFICES SOMETIME NEXT WEEK?

DON'T LOOK AT ME THAT WAY! I DIDN'T KNOW...I SWEAR I DIDN'T KNOW HE HAD A WILL! BUT...NOTHING HAS CHANGED! I'LL SHARE THE MONEY WITH YOU! YOU *MUST* BELIEVE ME!
OF COURSE, COUSIN SYBIL! OF COURSE! NOW YOU'D BETTER GO RIGHT TO BED AND REST!


THE CANDLE TREMBLING IN SYBIL'S HAND THREW UNDULATING SHAPES OF HORROR ON THE CRACKED WALLS! SHE FEARFULLY MOUNTED THE STAIRS KNOWING THAT THIS MIGHT BE HER LAST NIGHT ALIVE
THEY DON'T BELIEVE ME! I CAN SEE IT IN THEIR EYES! THEY'LL *MURDER ME!*

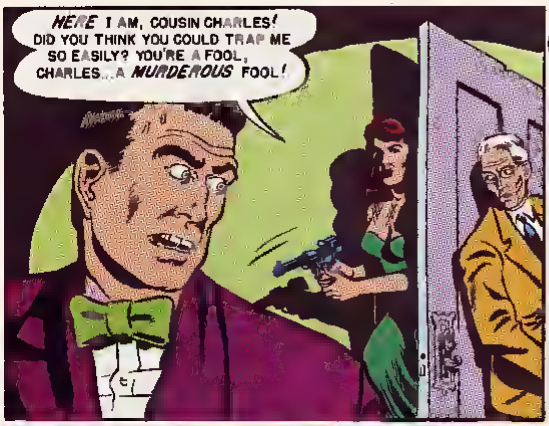
BUT...BUT CAN WE RISK IT?
WE *MUST!* COME NOW, COUSIN EDGAR, YOU'VE MURDERED ONCE ALREADY! THERE'S NO TURNING BACK, *NOW!*


WITH SOME OF THIS MORPHINE UNCLE ROGER USED IN THE LAST DAYS OF HIS...ER...ILLNESS, WE CAN...
I SUPPOSE YOU'RE RIGHT, COUSIN CHARLES, AS USUAL! BUT WE MUST DO IT QUICKLY! TONIGHT...WHILE SHE'S ASLEEP!

AND WHILE THE VILLAINOUS COUSINS PLANNED THEIR MURDEROUS DEED, SYBIL LAY WAITING... WAITING FOR THE FATAL FOOTSTEPS OUTSIDE HER DOOR...
I KNOW THEY'RE COMING TO GET ME! BUT THEY DON'T KNOW I HAVE *THIS!*...

I'LL GO IN FIRST! WHEN I GRAB HER, YOU GET THAT NEEDLE READY...
I HATE TO DO THIS TO DEAR COUSIN SYBIL, BUT...

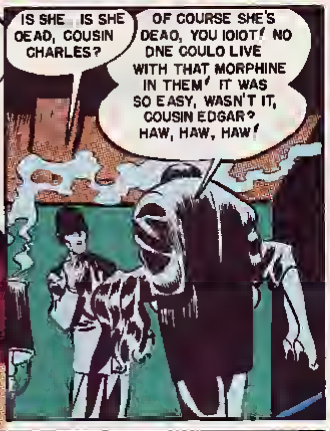
SHE'S...SHE'S *GONE!* WHERE... WHAT...

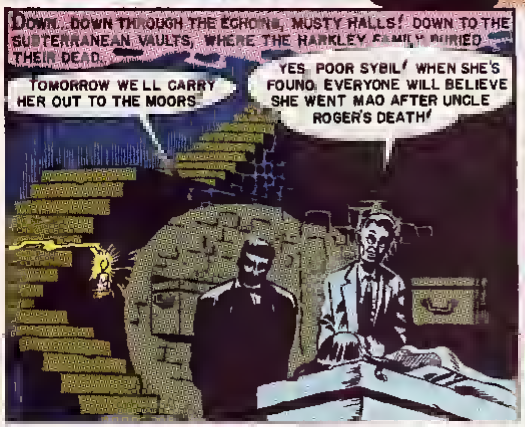

HERE I AM, COUSIN CHARLES! DID YOU THINK YOU COULD TRAP ME SO EASILY? YOU'RE A FOOL, CHARLES...A MURDEROUS FOOL!

LET GO! LET G-GO! AAAAAHH!
CHARLES, HELP ME! I'VE GOT HER!
BANG!

NOW THE NEEDLE, EDGAR! QUICKLY! AHH THIS WILL KEEP YOU QUIET, MY DEAR COUSIN... PERMANENTLY QUIET! THAT MONEY WILL BE MINE!

YOU SWINE... YOU DIRTY SWINE! YOU... COUGH... MAY KILL ME... BUT YOU CAN'T KILL THE HARKLEY CURSE! I'LL... I'LL COME BACK FROM THE GRAVE! COUGH... YOU SHAN'T GET THAT MONEY! I...UGG-GGH!


IS SHE... IS SHE DEAD, COUSIN CHARLES?
OF COURSE SHE'S DEAD, YOU IDIOT! NO ONE COULD LIVE WITH THAT MORPHINE IN THEM! IT WAS SO EASY, WASN'T IT, COUSIN EDGAR? HAW, HAW, HAW!


DOWN...DOWN THROUGH THE ECHOING, MUSTY HALLS! DOWN TO THE SUBTERRANEAN VAULTS, WHERE THE HARKLEY FAMILY BURIED THEIR DEAD...
TOMORROW WE'LL CARRY HER OUT TO THE MOORS...
YES...POOR SYBIL! WHEN SHE'S FOUND, EVERYONE WILL BELIEVE SHE WENT MAD AFTER UNCLE ROGER'S DEATH!

AND THEN THE MONEY...IT'S ALL OURS! MINE AND... YOURS!
WHY...WHY ARE YOU LOOKING AT ME...NO! CHARLES! DON'T... DON'T THINK THAT!

FOR ONE HORRIBLE MOMENT THE COUSINS STARED AT EACH OTHER! THE MURDEROUS GLINT IN CHARLES' EYE TOLD EDGAR THE TERRIBLE TRUTH! IT WAS THE SAME LOOK SYBIL HAD SEEN BEFORE HER DEATH...
HEAVENS! COUSIN CHARLES WOULD STOP AT NOTHING FOR THAT MONEY! HE'D EVEN KILL ME FOR IT!
THE COWARDLY FOOL! HE'S THE ONLY ONE IN MY WAY, BUT I'LL FIX THAT!
I DON'T LIKE IT, COUSIN CHARLES! I DON'T WANT HER IN THIS HOUSE!
YOU'RE NOT REALLY AFRAID OF HER, ARE YOU, EDGAR?
THIS HOUSE...I CAN FEEL HER EVERYWHERE! SHE'S...SHE'S HAUNTING US! WE'LL NEVER GET AWAY WITH IT, CHARLES!
STOP TREMBLING, EDGAR! SHE'S DEAD...AND BURIED! GHOSTS...HA!
P-BUT...I CAN HEAR HER! SHE'S COMING TO GET US! THAT NOISE...DON'T YOU HEAR IT?
STOP BABBLING, YOU WRETCH! THE WIND IS BANGING THE SHUTTERS! IT'S JUST THE STORM!
BUT, CHARLES! CHARLES! IT MAY BE THE CURSE!
HA, HA, HA! YOU YOU'RE AFRAID OF A DEAD WOMAN! YOU FOOL! IT'S ME YOU SHOULD BE AFRAID OF! ME!
CHARLES NO!
YOU SNIVELING COWARD! YOU DON'T DESERVE THAT MONEY!
YOU...GASP...YOU CAN'T DO THIS TO ME! SHE'LL GET YOU, TOO!
YOU WON'T GET AWAY FROM ME!
5

NO! NO! NO!
HA HA HA HA HA
TRAPPED! I'VE GOT YOU NOW!
AAHHH..
THERE'S NO OTHER WAY OUT OF THIS ROOM! YOU'RE FINISHED, EDGAR!
NO! SYBIL.. SYBIL! HELP ME!
CRUNCH
NO... PLEASE! YOU'RE MAD! MAD!
I WANT THAT MONEY!
CR-RACK!
CHARLES! CHARLES THE THE OH, NO!
OOOMH!
CRASH!

THE CHANDELIER IT'S HORRIBLE! IT'S SYBIL! SHE DID IT! SHE'S TRYING TO KILL US BOTH! THE KEY GOT TO GET THE KEY!
I'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE BEFORE SHE GETS ME, TOO!
I CAN HEAR HER! SHE'S AFTER ME! SYBIL! LEAVE ME ALONE!
YOU'RE DEAD... DEAD! YOU MUST BE! GET AWAY FROM ME!
I'M NOT DEAD! I WASN'T DEAD WHEN YOU BURIED ME! MY ILLNESS... I'VE BEEN TAKING MORPHINE FOR YEARS! I WAS JUST UNCONSCIOUS! AND NOW... I'M GOING TO KILL YOU!
NO! YOU'RE DEAD! BACK TO THE GRAVE... WHATEVER EVIL THING YOU ARE!
CRASH!
THE HOUSE, EDGAR! IT'S ON FIRE! IT'S BURNING! BURNING...!
LIKE A LIVING BEAST, THE FIRE RAN THROUGH THE ANCIENT TIMBERS, CONSUMING...DESTROYING! THE BLACKENED RUINS HISSED QUIETLY IN THE LIGHT RAIN, NOTHING MOVED ON THE DREARY MOOR! THE ANCIENT CURSE OF HARKLEY HEATH HAD REACHED IT'S DESTINY! HOUSE AND FAMILY HAD RETURNED TO THE EARTH FROM WHENCE THEY CAME...
7

THE DIAMOND OF DEATH!

The glitter of the huge diamond in Crandall's upturned palm almost blinded him. Even in the darkened room, its brilliance was enough to illuminate the sharp contours of his cruity face. His eyes were wide with a joy he had never felt before . . . his thin lips quivered with anticipation and triumph! He had found it . . after years as Butler here in the house of Silas Morgan, he had at last uncovered the secret hiding place of the fabulous *Diamond of Death!*

Suddenly the door behind him swung open and Crandall whirled in surprise The old man himself . . Silas Morgan leaning on his cane . . . came slowly into the room, his eyes focused on the ghstening gem still held in Crandall's palm.

"Y-You've found it," Morgan stammered, his own eyes growing wide as they contemplated the priceless diamond. "P-Put it back . . it will never bring anything but tragedy to you, you fool! Put it back before it casts its spell over YOU, as it has over everyone who has possessed it!"

Crandall's hst closed tighter over the sharp-edged stone, and he strained to remember the legend that had grown around the gem he had found at last What were the stone's peculiar . . almost supernatural powers supposed to be? Oh, yes . . that nonsense about it causing its owner to vanish from the Earth without a trace! Pure BUNK!

The old man lunged at him in that instant and Crandall stepped aside quickly, his foot shooting out in time to send Morgan crashing headlong to the floor So the owner of the *Diamond of Death* was supposed to disappear without a trace, he thought to himself, raising Morgan's cane and smashing it against the old man's skull! Well . . he would make certain that Morgan, its last owner . . DID vanish forever!

* * * * *

Crandall slammed the furnace door shut and left the cellar, his giggle turning to a roar of laughter Old Morgan was gone . . no trace of the man who collected valuable gems and tropical plants would EVER be found after the flames had done their work! With satisfaction he felt the huge diamond in his palm as he entered the plant room to look around for the last time His gaze darted from one color-splattered leaf to another . . never again would he have to tend these monsters of the jungle!

Something rubbery grazed the back of his neck and he whirled with surprise The thing that Morgan had called the "Man-Eater" was reaching its long green tentacles toward him! Desperately he tried to step away from its groping leaf . . but a sinuous arm enveloped him and dragged him inexorably toward the plant's gaping mouth! Crandall struggled . . a scream shrilled from his lips . . but he was held fast and drawn closer and closer to that yawning mouth! He tried to squirm free . . to scratch and bite his way free . . but his head was being enveloped in that stifling foliage that wouldn't permit him to fight back . .

* * * * *

The movement inside the swollen bud of the "Man-Eater" stopped . . . all was quiet in the room And then something appeared on the lips of the plant . . . trembled there for an instant . . fell quickly to the floor The room was once again swathed in quiet and darkness . . except for the *Diamond of Death* gleaming at the foot of the Man-Eater plant!

IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY, WHEN *ALFRED LEMONET* WAS ANATOMY INSTRUCTOR AT THE SURGEONS' SCHOOL OF HAMPSHIRE, IT WAS THE STRANGE BUT UNIVERSALLY-ACCEPTED CUSTOM FOR PROFESSORS TO PROVIDE THE CADAVERS USED BY THEIR PUPILS FOR EXPERIMENTATION! OUT OF THIS FACT.. AND A MAD DESIRE TO KEEP HIS JOB AT ALL COSTS ...CAME *LEMONET'S* GRUESOME REPUTATION AS...

DOCTOR OF HORROR

THESE BODIES MAKE YOU THE MOST SOUGHT-AFTER INSTRUCTOR IN THE WHOLE ANATOMY SECTION, LEMONET! WHERE DO YOU GET THEM ALL?

YOU'RE ABOUT TO FIND OUT, DOCTOR!

ANOTHER SUSPENSTORY from THE VAULT OF HORROR!

YOU KNOW PERFECTLY WELL *HOW*, LEMONET... MORE CORPSES FOR YOUR PUPILS TO EXPERIMENT WITH! IT'S BEEN THE CUSTOM FOR PROFESSORS TO PROVIDE THE CADAVERS USED IN THEIR CLASS ROOMS FOR CENTURIES.. YOU'LL HAVE TO GET THEM *SOMEHOW!*

Y-YES... I W-WILL...

IN THE OFFICE OF THE DEAN OF HAMPSHIRE'S SURGEON SCHOOL--A CURIOUS CONVERSATION TOOK PLACE ONE DAY....

...AND ATTENDANCE AT YOUR CLASSES IS FALLING OFF, LEMONET! IF YOU WANT TO STAY HERE AS A TEACHER IN ANATOMY... YOU'VE GOT TO GET MORE PUPILS!

B-BUT *NOW*, DOCTOR FINCH?

I C CAN'T LOSE THIS POSITION HERE AT SURGEON'S SCHOOL... I'VE *GOT* TO HOLD ONTO IT AT ALL COSTS! I-- I'LL GET BODIES FOR MY CLASSES — NO MATTER *WHAT* I HAVE TO DO TO GET THEM!

DRIVEN ON BY THE FEAR OF LOSING HIS POSITION, MEEK DOCTOR ALFRED LEMONET WRACKED HIS BRAINS FOR A PLAN TO SUPPLY HIS PUPILS WITH CADAVERS! AND SUDDENLY

WHAT A FOOL I'VE BEEN! WHILE I'VE SEARCHED ABOUT WILDLY FOR DEAD MEN TO GIVE TO MY PUPILS THERE'S BEEN A MAGNIFICENT SUPPLY RIGHT UNDER MY VERY NOSE! THIS COLUMN OF *BURIALS* IT'S THE ANSWER!

THIS MAN . JOHN FARROW DIED YESTERDAY, AND WAS BURIED JUST THIS MORNING ON SPANISH HILL! THERE S NO ONE ABOUT TO SEE ME TAKE THE BODY . IF I WORK QUICKLY AND SILENTLY!

THIS IS THE ONE! JUST FRESH ENOUGH TO EXPERIMENT ON . . . AND NO ONE NEED EVER KNOW HOW I GOT IT! LET THE OTHER INSTRUCTORS BID AGAINST ONE ANOTHER FOR THE BODIES OF CRIMINALS . . . I'LL GET MY OWN SUPPLY!

JOHN FARROW 16 17

ALFRED LEMONET, FRAIL AND MEEK AS HE WAS, NEVERTHELESS WAS CAPABLE OF HIDDEN AND CURIOUS TALENTS WHEN IT CAME TO PROTECTING THE JOB HE CHERISHED SO MUCH! AND SO, THROUGH THE LONG HOURS OF THE NIGHT, HIS SHOVEL FLEW INCESSANTLY

I . . . I'VE STRUCK THE *COFFIN!* NOT MUCH LONGER . . .

ALFRED LEMONET, *DID* CONTINUE IN HIS JOB! AND AS TIME WENT ON, AND HIS SUPPLY OF CADAVERS FAILED TO DIMINISH, HE BEGAN TO ATTRACT PUPILS FROM ALL PARTS OF HAMPSHIRE . . .

AAAH! PERFECT . . . NOT A BRUISE . . . NOT A MARK! IT SHOULD BE GOOD FOR AT LEAST *TEN* PUPILS! FINCH WILL *HAVE* TO LET ME CONTINUE FOR A LITTLE WHILE, ANYWAY!

MY CLASSES ARE THE LARGEST IN THE WHOLE SCHOOL . AND ALL BECAUSE I'VE BEEN CLEVER ENOUGH TO GET MORE BODIES THAN ANY OTHER TEACHER! AT LAST I CAN BREATHE EASY ABOUT HOLDING THIS POSITION!

LEMONET'S JOB *WAS* SECURE, BUT AFTER A TIME HIS AMBITION BEGAN TO ASSERT ITSELF AS HE HEARD THE OTHER TEACHERS REFER TOHIM AS A LEADING PROFESSOR OF ANATOMY...

MUST I SPEND MY WHOLE LIFE COOPED UP HERE IN THE SURGEONS' SCHOOL? THERE MUST BE A MORE IMPORTANT JOB FOR A MAN OF MY TALENTS! IF I COULD ONLY FIND...

W--WHAT...? OH... DOCTOR FINCH! WHAT BRINGS YOU TO *MY* HUMBLE ROOM...?

URGENT BUSINESS, LEMONET... AND PERHAPS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY FOR *YOU!* I WANT YOU TO LISTEN CAREFULLY TO ME...YOU'RE OBVIOUSLY A MAN WHO HAS TO BE TOLD SOMETHING ONLY *ONCE!*

SEVERAL MEMBERS OF THE ROYAL MEDICAL COLLEGE ARE COMING HERE TOMORROW... THE REASON FOR THEIR VISIT IS TO SELECT A SUCCESSOR FOR *ME!* I HAVE BEEN CHOSEN GOVERNOR OF THE ENTIRE MEDICAL SCHOOL HERE...AND THE POSITION OF DEAN WILL BE OPEN! THE CHOICE LIES BETWEEN YOU AND DR. CRANSHAW... AND AT THE PRESENT TIME, CRANSHAW IS FIRST IN LINE FOR THE JOB!

BUT YOU STILL HAVE A CHANCE... IF YOU CAN CONVINCE THE INSPECTORS THAT YOU'RE A BETTER MAN THAN CRANSHAW! I SUGGEST YOU PREPARE A CLASS IN CADAVER DISSECTION FOR TOMORROW... AND MAKE IT THE BEST LESSON OF YOUR CAREER... IF YOU WANT THAT JOB!

Y--YES, DR FINCH... I--I'LL DO MY BEST!

CRANSHAW IS AHEAD OF ME FOR THAT JOB! IT'S WHAT I'VE ALWAYS WANTED... DEAN OF HAMPSHIRE SURGEONS' SCHOOL! I'D DO *ANYTHING* TO GET HIM OUT OF THE WAY...

AMAZING HOW YOUR POPULARITY HAS GROWN, LEMONET.. AND THE NUMBER OF CADAVERS YOU'RE ABLE TO PROVIDE.

W--WHO...? *CRANSHAW!* Y--YOU TOOK ME BY SURPRISE!

YOU'VE GOT THE REST OF THE TEACHERS TALKING ABOUT YOUR SUCCESS IN GETTING BODIES FOR YOUR LECTURES! WHAT'S YOUR CAREFULLY GUARDED SECRET, LEMONET.. WHERE DO YOU GET THEM ALL?

Y--YOU'RE ABOUT TO FIND OUT, CRANSHAW!

Y-YOU'RE *MAD*, LEMONET! N-NO...

NOT MAD DR CRANSHAW JUST INTENT ON GETTING THAT JOB! AND NOTHING *NO ONE'S* GOING TO STAND IN MY WAY!

THAT LESSON FOR THE INSPECTORS OF THE ROYAL MEDICAL COLLEGE IT *WILL* BE THE FINEST OF MY CAREER, JUST AS FINCH SUGGESTED AND CRANSHAW IS GOING TO HELP ME GET THE JOB OF DEAN... BY SERVING AS THE CADAVER MY PUPILS WILL EXPERIMENT ON!

THROUGH THE LONG HOURS OF THAT NIGHT ALFRED LEMONET TOILED AT HIS GRUESOME TASK... DISFIGURING THE FACE OF DR CRANSHAW SO THAT IT WAS UNRECOGNIZABLE! AND HIS LESSON *WAS* A SUCCESS...

LET ME BE THE FIRST TO CONGRATULATE YOU, LEMONET... EFFECTIVE ON THE FIRST OF THE MONTH YOU ARE THE NEW DEAN! CRANSHAW'S SUDDEN DISAPPEARANCE WAS AN UNFORTUNATE INCIDENT... BUT IT SERVED ONLY TO CLEAR THE WAY FOR *YOUR* APPOINTMENT!

THE MONTHS WENT BY UNEVENTFULLY, AND AT LAST SECURE AS THE DEAN OF THE SURGEONS' SCHOOL, ALFRED LEMONET'S AMBITIONS ONCE AGAIN CAME TO LIFE...

YOU RANG FOR ME, DOCTOR LEMONET?

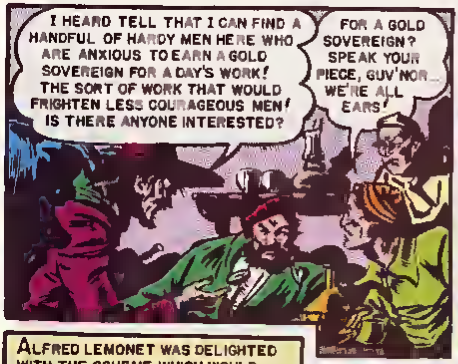
SOMETHING URGENT HAS COME UP, HAWKINS... I'LL BE GONE FOR SEVERAL HOURS! IF YOU HAVE TO CONTACT ME... I'LL BE IN CONFERENCE WITH THE *ROYAL SURGEON!*

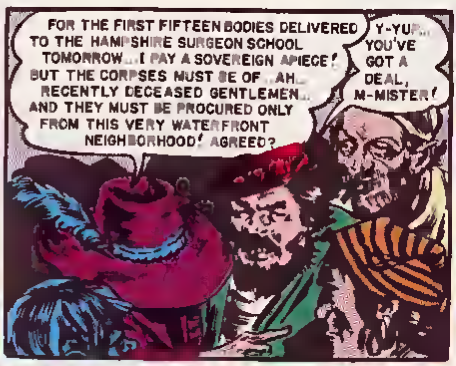
FINCH.. RETIRING BECAUSE OF ILL-HEALTH FROM THE POST THEY GAVE HIM! THEY'LL BE LOOKING FOR A SUCCESSOR AS GOVERNOR OF THE MEDICAL SCHOOL... I MUST GET THE JOB! IT MEANS AS MUCH AS LIFE ITSELF TO ME!

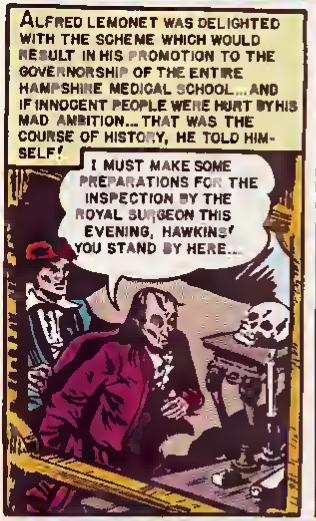
THROWING HIS CUSTOMARY CAUTION AND MEEKNESS TO THE WINDS, ALFRED LEMONET JOURNEYED TO THE OFFICE OF THE ROYAL SURGEON IN ORDER TO PLEAD HIS CASE FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE POST RELINQUISHED BY DEAN FINCH! FINALLY HE EMERGED, A CURIOUS GLITTER IN HIS EYES...

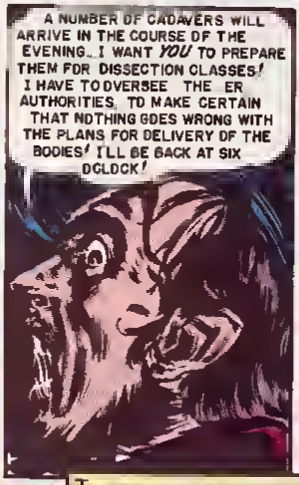
WE WILL CONSIDER ME IF I CAN PROVE THAT THE SCHOOL HAS PROGRESSED SINCE I BECAME DEAN! AN INSPECTION WILL BE MADE OF CLASSES TOMORROW... I MUST *HURRY!*

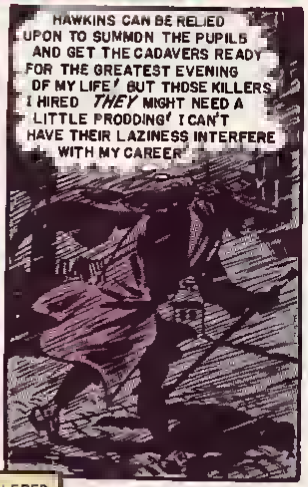
I MUST FURNISH CADAVERS FOR EVERY CLASS IN SCHOOL BY TOMORROW NIGHT... NICE, FRESH CORPSES! AND GRAVE-DIGGING IS OUT OF THE QUESTION THIS TIME! IT'S AN EMERGENCY THAT CALLS FOR MORE DRASTIC MEASURES! AAAH... JUST THE SORT OF PLACE I WANT!

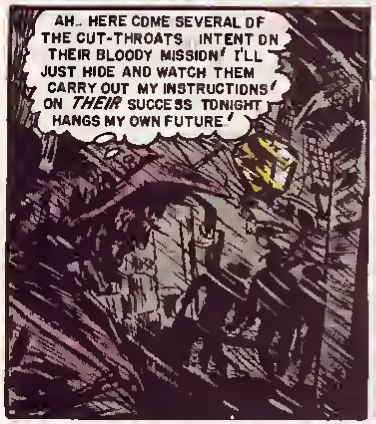

I HEARD TELL THAT I CAN FIND A HANDFUL OF HARDY MEN HERE WHO ARE ANXIOUS TO EARN A GOLD SOVEREIGN FOR A DAY'S WORK! THE SORT OF WORK THAT WOULD FRIGHTEN LESS COURAGEOUS MEN! IS THERE ANYONE INTERESTED?
FOR A GOLD SOVEREIGN? SPEAK YOUR PIECE, GUV'NOR... WE'RE ALL EARS!

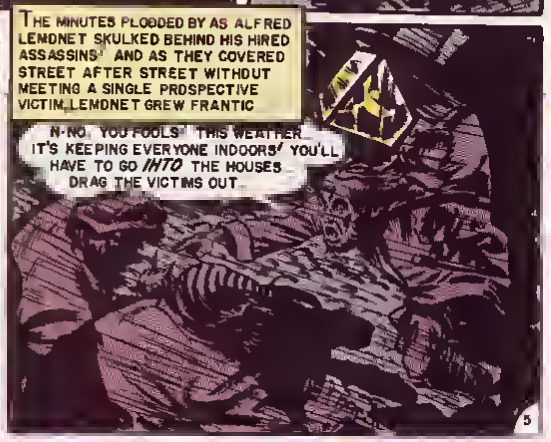

FOR THE FIRST FIFTEEN BODIES DELIVERED TO THE HAMPSHIRE SURGEON SCHOOL TOMORROW...I PAY A SOVEREIGN APIECE! BUT THE CORPSES MUST BE OF...AH... RECENTLY DECEASED GENTLEMEN... AND THEY MUST BE PROCURED ONLY FROM THIS VERY WATERFRONT NEIGHBORHOOD! AGREED?
Y-YUP... YOU'VE GOT A DEAL, M-MISTER!


ALFRED LEMONET WAS DELIGHTED WITH THE SCHEME WHICH WOULD RESULT IN HIS PROMOTION TO THE GOVERNORSHIP OF THE ENTIRE HAMPSHIRE MEDICAL SCHOOL...AND IF INNOCENT PEOPLE WERE HURT BY HIS MAD AMBITION...THAT WAS THE COURSE OF HISTORY, HE TOLD HIMSELF!
I MUST MAKE SOME PREPARATIONS FOR THE INSPECTION BY THE ROYAL SURGEON THIS EVENING, HAWKINS! YOU STAND BY HERE...


A NUMBER OF CADAVERS WILL ARRIVE IN THE COURSE OF THE EVENING...I WANT *YOU* TO PREPARE THEM FOR DISSECTION CLASSES! I HAVE TO OVERSEE THE ER AUTHORITIES, TO MAKE CERTAIN THAT NOTHING GOES WRONG WITH THE PLANS FOR DELIVERY OF THE BODIES! I'LL BE BACK AT SIX OCLOCK!


HAWKINS CAN BE RELIED UPON TO SUMMON THE PUPILS AND GET THE CADAVERS READY FOR THE GREATEST EVENING OF MY LIFE! BUT THOSE KILLERS I HIRED *THEY* MIGHT NEED A LITTLE PRODDING! I CAN'T HAVE THEIR LAZINESS INTERFERE WITH MY CAREER!


AH.. HERE COME SEVERAL OF THE CUT-THROATS INTENT ON THEIR BLOODY MISSION! I'LL JUST HIDE AND WATCH THEM CARRY OUT MY INSTRUCTIONS! ON *THEIR* SUCCESS TONIGHT HANGS MY OWN FUTURE!


THE MINUTES PLODDED BY AS ALFRED LEMONET SKULKED BEHIND HIS HIRED ASSASSINS! AND AS THEY COVERED STREET AFTER STREET WITHOUT MEETING A SINGLE PROSPECTIVE VICTIM, LEMONET GREW FRANTIC
N-NO, YOU FOOLS! THIS WEATHER... IT'S KEEPING EVERYONE INDOORS! YOU'LL HAVE TO GO *INTO* THE HOUSES... DRAG THE VICTIMS OUT...

A FEW MINUTES LATER..IN THE OFFICE OF THE DEAN OF THE HAMPSHIRE SURGEONS' SCHOOL A PAIR OF ANXIOUS EYES PEERED THROUGH THE WINDOW TO THE STREET BELOW...

DOCTOR LEMONET WILL BE FURIOUS WITH ME! THOSE BODIES THAT WERE TO BE DELIVERED HERE BY SIX O'CLOCK FOR HIS EVENING'S CLASSES... THERE'S BEEN NO SIGN OF THEM!

AND THE DOCTOR HIMSELF, *HE'S* LATE, TOO! THIS IS A TERRIBLE PREDICAMENT, WITH THE ROYAL SURGEON COMING HERE HIMSELF TO MAKE THE INSPECTION... AND NOTHING IS *READY!*

S-SHOULD I DO OUT TO SEARCH FOR THE DOCTOR AND TELL HIM THAT THE BODIES HAVEN'T ARRIVED DR...W-WHAT'S *THAT*? T-THE DDDR...STARTLED ME!

WE WERE TOLD TO BRING CORPSES HERE TO THE SCHOOL...

T-THANK HEAVENS YOU'VE GOTTEN HERE AT LAST! FOLLOW ME RIGHT TO THE ANATOMY ROOM... AND YOU'D BETTER HURRY WITH THE REST OF THE CADAVERS! IF THE ROYAL SURGEON ARRIVES AND THERE AREN'T ENOUGH CORPSES...DOCTOR LEMONET WILL DIE OF HUMILIATION!

THAT'S IT...PUT IT RIGHT THERE AND GET THOSE OTHER BODIES HERE AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE! THERE'S NOT A MOMENT TO LOSE! IT'S ALMOST SIX O'CLOCK ALREADY

W-WE'RE DOING THE BEST WE CAN, MISTER... AND IF SOMEONE HADN'T HELPED US OUT WE WOULDN'T EVEN HAVE GOTTEN *THIS* ONE!

STOP TALKING... AND *HURRY!* THE BODIES MUST BE PREPARED... AND I HAVE TO LOCATE DOCTOR LEMONET SOMEHOW! IN THIS WEATHER...HE MAY BE LOST...OR MAY HAVE MET UP WITH SOME UNFORSEEABLE ACCIDENT!

HURRY...WE CAN'T FAIL *NOW!* EVERYTHING DOCTOR LEMONET HAS DONE IN THE PAST HAS BEEN JUST A PREPARATION FOR TONIGHT! WE MUST HELP HIM ACHIEVE THE REWARD HE DESERVES!

AND ON THAT STORMY NIGHT IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY, DOCTOR ALFRED LEMONET *DID* RECIEVE THE REWARD HE SO RIGHLY DESERVED!

HIGH IN THE EMPTY SKY WE FLEW, ALEC AND I, IN A SMALL SILVER MONOPLANE STREAKING WEST ACROSS THE BROAD PACIFIC...THE PACIFIC, A VAST GLITTERING EXPANSE SPREADING IN ALL DIRECTIONS TO THE HORIZONS!

LITTLE DID WE REALIZE, LOOKING DOWN ON A TINY ISLAND LYING BENEATH US ON THE SURFACE OF THE OCEAN, THAT THIS LITTLE JUNGLE ISLAND...THIS LONELY SPECK OF DIRT, WOULD, IN THE FOLLOWING MOMENTS, BRING US AS CLOSE TO HADES AS MORTAL MAN MIGHT COME!

AND SO, LET US PROCEED FURTHER INTO MY TALE... THE WEIRD TALE OF THE...

ISLAND of DEATH

DID YOU NOTICE THAT LITTLE ISLAND DOWN THERE, STEVE? I CAN'T FIND IT ON THE CHARTS!

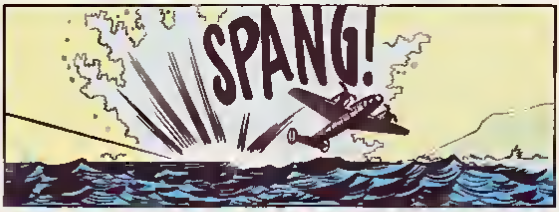
ON YOUR TOES, ALEC! THE MOTOR DOESN'T SOUND RIGHT!

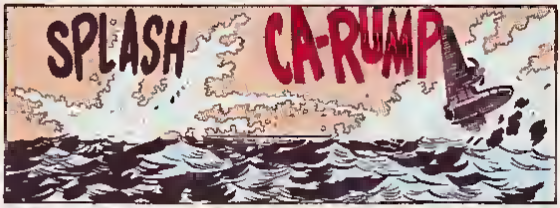
THE FUEL PUMP SEEMS TO BE JAMMED! THE MOTOR'S CONKING OUT!

STEVE! STEVE! WE'RE *LOSING ALTITUDE!*

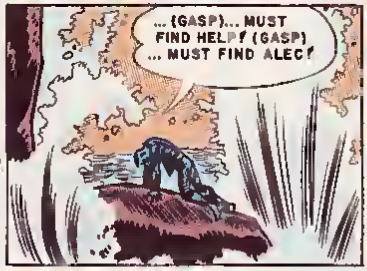
SPUT! SPUT!

ANOTHER SUSPENSTORY from THE VAULT OF HORROR!





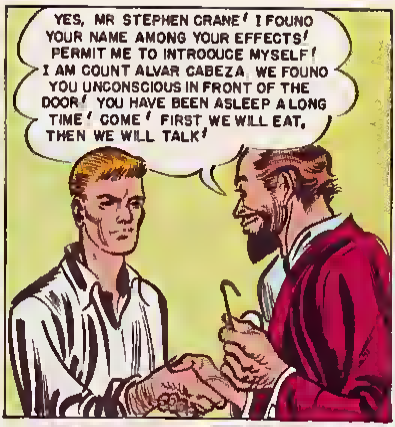
IN A MOMENT IT WAS OVER! THE PLANE WAS CRUMPLED ON THE CORAL AND I FOUND MYSELF ALONE...STRUGGLING IN THE WATER WITH GREAT WAVES RUSHING OVER ME, HURLING THEMSELVES AGAINST THE REEF! HOW I MANAGED TO STAY ALIVE IN THAT TURMOIL, I'LL NEVER KNOW! IN ANY EVENT, I WAS SWEPT TO SHORE... WHERE I FELL EXHAUSTED!



SKIRTING THE ISLAND, I FOLLOWED THE BEACH AND AS I CLIMBED AROUND ONE NARROW PENINSULA OF ROCK, IT CAME INTO VIEW, PERCHED ON THE HIGHEST, BLACKEST CRAG! IT WAS THEN THAT I GOT THE FIRST SENSATION OF THE HORROR THAT WAS YET TO COME...

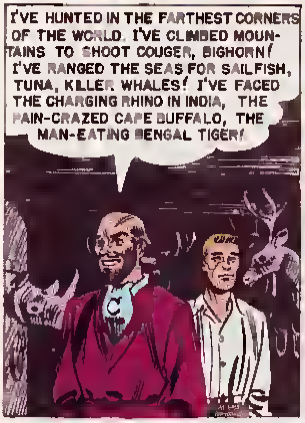
I POUNDED ON THE HEAVY OAKEN DOOR LIKE A MADMAN! BUT THE SHOCK OF THE PAST HOUR WAS CATCHING UP WITH ME! I PASSED OUT JUST BEFORE THE DOOR SWUNG OPEN!

I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG I REMAINED UNCONSCIOUS, BUT WHEN I CAME TO, I FOUND MY HOST HAD PROVIDED ME WITH A DRY, CLEAN SET OF CLOTHES AND A HOT BATH WAS WAITING FOR ME! I REFRESHED MYSELF AND WENT TO MEET MY BENEFACTOR.

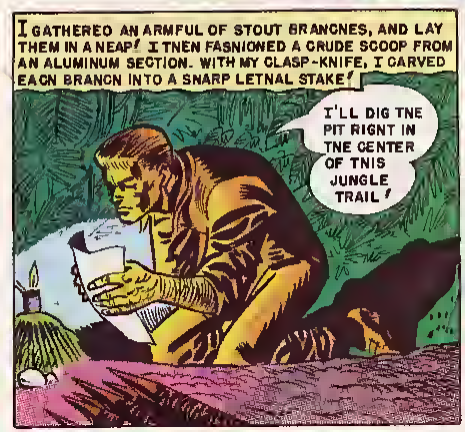


THE COUNT HAD A LAVISH MEAL PREPARED! THE FOOD WAS EXCELLENT. THE COUNT WAS THE PERFECT HOST, BUT SOMEHOW I COULD NOT ENJOY IT! THERE WAS AN EVIL OVERTONE TO THIS WHOLE CASTLE AND IT'S TWO LONELY OCCUPANTS, COUNT ALVAR CABEZA AND HIS SILENT SERVANT, MULOK...

THE COUNT HAD A FANTASTIC TROPHY ROOM. THERE WAS A TROPHY OF EVERY CONCEIVABLE TYPE OF WILD ANIMAL... EITHER HANGING ON THE WALL OR STANDING ABOUT THE ROOM!

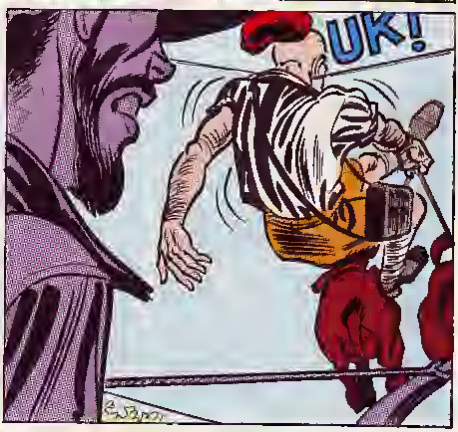


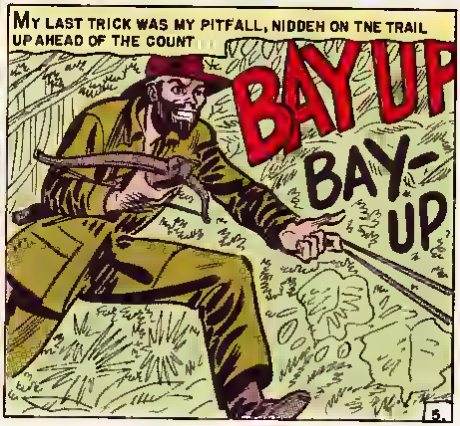
HE WAS INSANE... COMPLETELY INSANE! I NAD NO CHOICE. I STUMBLED OUT OF THAT MAD NOUSE AND PLUNGED INTO THE FOREST! IT WAS TOO INCREDIBLE TO BELIEVE! I WAS GOING TO BE NUNTED... LIKE A RABBIT! AS THE JUNGLE CLOSED ABOUT ME, I CALMED DOWN AND TOOK MY BEARINGS: I WOULD HAVE TO BE CALM...EVERY MOMENT COUNTED!



BY SUN-UP, MY PIT WAS DUG! MY HANDS WERE BLEEDING AND MY WHOLE BODY ACNED FROM TNE EXERTION! I ERECTED THE STAKES IN THE FLOOR OF TNE PIT, AND THEN I STARTED CAMOUFLAGING MY PITFALL!

MULOK CAME RUNNING FULL-TILT DOWN THE TRAIL WITH THE DOGS DRAGGING HIM ALONG! HE NEVER SAW THE TINIEST GLINT OF MY DEADLY STEELWIRE WAITING FOR HIS THROAT!

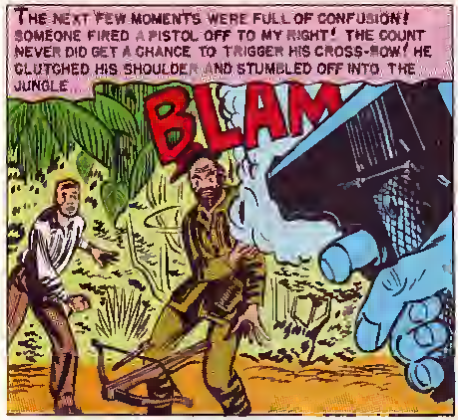




THE HOUNDS CHARGED RIGHT ON INTO THE PIT! BUT THE COUNT WAS THE DEVIL INCARNATE! HIS EYES WERE LIKE AN EAGLE'S! HE SPOTTED MY TRAP... JUST AS HE HAD SEEN MY STEEL WIRE! BUT TOO LATE TO STOP THE DOGS...

STRAIGHT AT ME HE CAME! I THINK HE SENSED HE WAS CLOSE TO THE KILL! HIS EYES WERE BRIGHT, AND HE STALKED ME LIKE A COBRA ABOUT TO STRIKE! I COULDN'T JUST LIE THERE! I WAS BURSTING TO *BREAK AND RUN*—

--I CHARGED!!



WE HEARD HIM CRASHING AROUND IN THE BRUSH... AND THEN THERE WAS SILENCE! WHEN WE CAME UPON THE BODY, THE FEATURES WERE SWOLLEN BEYOND RECOGNITION. HE HAD BEEN LITERALLY STUNG TO DEATH BY THE HUGE WASPS!

WE *DID* FIND A BOAT AND WE SAILED FROM THAT ISLAND OF HORROR! THE LAST THING WE SAW, AS IT PASSED OUT OF VIEW, WAS THE MENACING BLACK CASTLE OF THE LATE COUNT ALVAR CABEZA... PERCHED HIGH ON THE CLIFF...

THE VAULT KEEPER